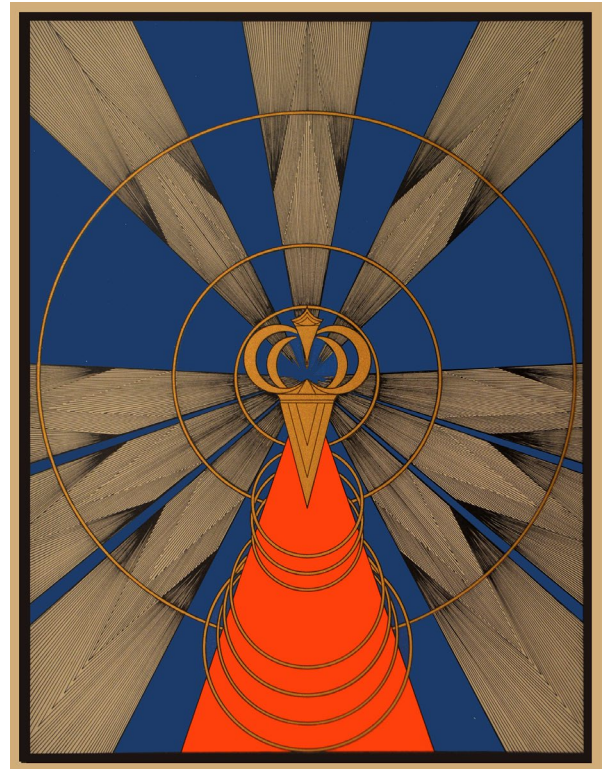


**PRESSE RELEASE**



Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, *The Central Spiritual Sun*, mixed technique on paper, c. 1926-1934, private collection © Eranos Foundation, Ascona)



Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, *Kether, The Crown*, mixed technique on paper, c. 1926-1934, private collection © Eranos Foundation, Ascona

***Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn – Deep Knowledge***

**with Monia Ben Hamouda, Kerstin Brätsch, Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, Hylozoic/Desires (Himali Singh Soin & David Soin Tappeser), Mountain River Jump!, Sriwhana Spong**

**Press tour**

Thu 29/06

11 am

**Exhibition opening**

Thu 29/06

7 pm

**Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (1881-1962) - artist, entrepreneur, and spiritualist - left behind a fascinating visual oeuvre which the Kunsthalle Mainz invites its visitors to discover it. The approximately 70 works by Fröbe-Kapteyn are exhibited together with five international contemporary artists and artist duos. What they all share is their common interest in exploring holistic world views. They develop concepts that counter knowledge shaped by rationality, whiteness, the patriarchy, and colonialism. Instead of *l'art pour l'art* (art for art's sake), their emphasis is on the effects that art (and with it images in general) can have.**

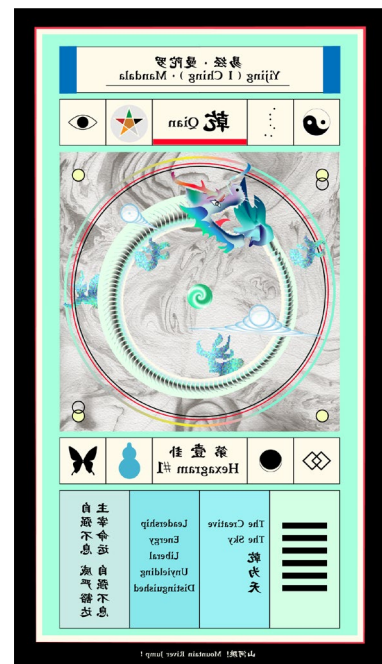
Anna Marquis  
Presse- & Öffentlichkeitsarbeit / Verwaltung  
T +49 6131 126936  
[marquis@kunsthalle-mainz.de](mailto:marquis@kunsthalle-mainz.de)  
[www.kunsthalle-mainz.de](http://www.kunsthalle-mainz.de)

Am Zollhafen 3 – 5, 55118 Mainz  
Öffnungszeiten:  
Di, Do, Fr 10-18 Uhr,  
Mi 10-21 Uhr  
Sa, So und an Feiertagen 11-18 Uhr

We live in a time in which new directions are being defined: Thinkers, activists, art producers, and researchers are questioning given dogmas and generating new knowledge – knowledge that recognises the boundaries of academic disciplines and Western epistemologies; knowledge that is oriented towards holistic worldviews or knowledge systems of diverse cultures. What is also key is to cast a glance back in time and unearth what has been forgotten, overlooked, or erased from history. In the field of art, we are discovering positions that, owing to their socio-cultural context, their gender, or their ethnicity, were excluded for a very long time. As outsider art, arts-&-crafts, ritual artefacts, or research practices, they could find no place in the general art discourse.

**Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn** (b. 1881, London, Great Britain; d. 1962, Ascona, Switzerland) is precisely such a figure. Her life as a woman, a researcher, a mystic, and an artist is fascinating. In the culturally and politically difficult years prior to World War II, she explored theosophy and East Asian philosophy, assembled a huge image archive, and promoted interaction between different disciplines many years before the word transdisciplinary was on everyone's lips. Her visual oeuvre, the powerful geometric *Meditation Panels* and the *Visions*, which draw from her discussions with psychologist Carl Gustav Jung, are part of her encompassing artistic practice. On the basis of a highly varied pictorial system, Fröbe-Kapteyn sought to find answers to the order of the world and, starting from the notion that forms do have psycho-affective meanings, endeavored to achieve specific effects. "The most profound things in human life," she is said to have commented, "can only ... be expressed in images."

In the exhibition, five contemporary artists and artist duos forge a link to the present day. The works by **Monia Ben Hamouda**, **Kerstin Brätsch**, **Hylozoic/Desires (Himali Singh Soin & David Soin Tappeser)**, **Mountain River Jump!** and **Sriwhana Spong** explore concepts that counter knowledge shaped by rationality, whiteness, the patriarchy, and colonialism. In their works they create spaces and narratives in which they invite us to encounter such alternative forms of knowledge – knowledge that is subconscious, physical, natural, spiritual, etc. Knowledge that usually is not produced and conveyed using words, language, and concepts. The artists often take ritual practices in history and the present as their starting point. Like Fröbe-Kapteyn for her part, they underscore that art is a tool for research, healing, or communication, while in the process adopting anti-colonial positions critical of the power status quo. It becomes clear that instead of the principle of *l'art pour l'art*, the emphasis is on the impact that art (and with it, images in general) can have.



Mountain River Jump!, *Yijing (I Ching) Mandala*, 2023, Video installation with instructions, single-channel video, vertical, 16:9, silent, looped, Courtesy of the artist duo Mountain River Jump!

The daughter of an calligrapher from Tunisia, **Monia Ben Hamouda** (\*1991 in Milan, lives and works between al-Qayrawan and Milan) reworks and confronts her own cultural heritage through what she calls, a shamanistic process. Her works mark a clash between tradition and the politicized present. Her imagery is rich in cultural-religious symbolism and informed by ritual. Especially her work with spices in the new installations focuses on the multisensory experience as well as the idea that her works have healing powers. She understands healing not in a medical sense, but in a political and social sense, for example as healing of traumas of migration. Traumas, which burn themselves into a family history over generations.



Monia Ben Hamouda, Installation view of *The Destruction of the Idols of Ka'ba*, La Casa Encendida, Galerna, 2023. Photo: La Casa Encendida / Galerna, 2023. Courtesy of Monia Ben Hamouda, Milan and ChertLüdde, Berlin

**Kerstin Brätsch** (b. 1979 in Hamburg, lives in New York) is primarily known for large-scale paintings that incorporate performative and collaborative aspects. However, during the first corona lockdown in New York, she transferred her expansive and spatial way of working into a personal and "inward" process of regular drawing. The result is the series "Para Psychics." During this period, she explored mysticism, tarot, plant medicine, and deities such as the Sumerian sky goddess Inanna, creating 100 drawings on paper that are displayed in a site-specific installation. Becoming and passing, practices of divination and the questioning of the subconscious are thematized in these colorful, dense images as possibilities for finding the truth.

**Hylozoic/Desires** (Himali Singh Soin, born in Delhi, lives in London and New Delhi, India & David Soin Tappeser, b. 1985 in Germany, lives in London and New Delhi) uses metaphors from outer space and nature to construct their own imagined world. This is full of entanglements, deep fissures, displacements, alienation and distance but at the same time intimacy. With the musician David Soin Tappeser, Himali Singh Soin forms the artist duo Hylozoic/Desires. Together they work on performances that address the key role of rituals and their symbols in social as well as ecological systems. The work *As Grand As What* addresses the key role of rituals and their symbols in social as well as in ecological systems. Based on research about ancestral healing rituals from the Himalayas and a mandala visualizing the Buddhist practice system of Kalachakra (Sanskrit: wheel of time), a story about the search for a lost collective life force (bla or prana) unfolds. This force is evoked through processes of grounding, circulation, and regeneration.

The Chinese artist duo **Mountain River Jump!** (Huang Shan & Huang He, both b.1985, live in Foshan, Guangdong, China) deals with Chinese mythology as a subversive practice in contemporary China. In the Pearl River Delta of Guangdong Province, where the artists live, divination has a tradition going back thousands of years, but was successively suppressed by the communist system. By transferring these traditional rituals and other spiritual practices into the sphere of art, the artist duo Mountain River Jump! creates places of remembrance and preservation, but also of subtle resistance. Currently, the artists are completing a post-graduate studies course in analytical psychology with a focus on C.G. Jung. Their work at Kunsthalle Mainz proposes a contemporary and unorthodox form of divination. It visualizes the interplay between a mandala pattern and the 64 hexagrams of the *Yijing (I Ching)* system, attempting to construct a dialogue between aesthetic and metaphysical ideas and the real-life situations of the visitors.

Anna Marquis  
 Presse- & Öffentlichkeitsarbeit / Verwaltung  
 T +49 6131 126936  
[marquis@kunsthalle-mainz.de](mailto:marquis@kunsthalle-mainz.de)  
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**Sriwhana Spong** (b. 1979 in Auckland, New Zealand, lives in London, UK) is interested in ritual-spiritual forms of dance and music as well as the relationship between body and language. In her works autobiography and fiction are mixed with research on written records of mystical women, such as Hildegard von Bingen. In Fröbe-Kapteyn's immediate environment, Monte Verità was a well-known meeting place of the *Lebensreform* movement, of pacifists, artists, among them many dancers, and supporters of various alternative movements. Starting from this, Spong activates Fröbe-Kapteyn's works through her ongoing series *Untitled Orchestra* - objects that function as instruments..

To accompany the exhibition, we are organizing an extensive mediation and events program, including among others:

Artist talk with Monia Ben Hamouda and Yasmin Afschar  
Fri 30/06, 6 pm  
Cost: included in admission

Activation *Instrument I (Sevgi and Bengisu)*  
Improvisation of/with the work of Sriwhana Spong together with performers from the Mainz region  
Wed 05/07, 7 pm  
Wed 16/08, 7 pm  
Cost: included in admission

Reflections - Feminist tour with Yana Prinsloo (Theater Studies, JGU) and Marlène Harles  
Wed 06/09, 7 pm  
Cost: included in admission

You can find visual material under the link <https://www.kunsthalle-mainz.de/de/press> as well as continuously updated information about the exhibition from 05/06/2023 on our website.

We would like to thank the Eranos Foundation, Ascona, for the collaboration. The exhibition is kindly supported by the Ministry for Families, Women, Culture and Integration and the Mainzer Volksbank.



*Instrument I (Sevgi and Bengisu)*  
2022, Bronze, plastic bottle caps, cymbals, terrahertz stones, antique keys, goat bells, jingle bells, ecorative bells, clapper bells, wooden juniper beads, rocks, shells, earrings, pebbles, glass marbles, Courtesy the artist and Michael Lett